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ABSTRACT

In late February 1977, questionnaires were sent to all special education, kindergarten, third, and fifth grade teachers who visited Forest Valley Outdoor Education Centre during early October 1976, late November 1976, and early February 1977 and to their principals to obtain information concerning their perceptions of the degree to which the outdoor experience at the Centre effected alterations in the regular classroom program. Of the 176 teacher and 94 principal questionnares sent, 103 were returned by teachers and 74 were returned by principals. Among the information obtained was: teachers' introduction to outdoor education, objectives of visit, problems planning/administering a visit, value of visits, and benefits from a visit. One-fourth of the teachers felt their visits to the Centre had caused them to change their teaching methods, especially in their science program; most teachers (83%) felt they made their classroom programs more relevant by visiting Forest Valley; two-thirds of the teachers felt more confident in their ability to teach outdoors; most principals (68%) observed a change in the science program; and 90% of the principals felt Forest Valley was important to very important in fulfilling their school's goals, especially student development, including physical, social, attitudinal, skill, and language development. (NQA)

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RESEARCH REPORT

EVALUATION OF THE FOREST VALLEY OUTDOOR EDUCATION CENTRE REGARDING ELEMENTARY TEACHER DEVELOPMENT AND ATTITUDE CHANGE

SECTION I

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

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M. Rowan

July, 1977

Department of Educational Research and Development

RC 013222

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EVALUATION OF THE FOREST VALLEY OUTDOOR EDUCATION CENTRE REGARDING ELEMENTARY TEACHER DEVELOPMENT AND ATTITUDE CHANGE

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to gather information concerning teacher and principal perceptions of the degree to which the outdoor experience at Forest Valley has effected alterations in the regular classroom program. This survey will also aid in assessing changes in teacher and principal awareness of the value, operation and integration of Forest Valley's outdoor program with regular classroom programs.

Background and Focus

The Forest Valley Outdoor Education Centre began ten years ago with its principle focus on providing inner-city school students with the opportunity to experience an outdoor setting. Eventually the facilities were extended on a voluntary basis to provide service to all levels of schools (kindergarten to grade thirteen) in North York. By 1969-70 the Centre reached a maximum usage of 79,200 student visits per school year. However, due to the increase of other outdoor educational facilities in and around metropolitan Toronto, the Centre has been predominantly used by elementary schools. At the same time the staff at the Centre have included a daily program for Special Education (behavioural students and low multiple handicapped) students. As well, they have developed a set of goals for its operation which focus on providing assistance to teachers and their support staff.

Besides the services provided to elementary students since 1969, the Centre has also provided teachers with a variety of different ways to develop their skills in outdoors, ranging from Ministry of Education credit courses in Outdoor Education (1969-73), individual school staff orientation, professional development seasonal outdoor workshops and consultative resources.

Until September 1976, the Forest Valley Outdoor Education Centre operated on a voluntary basis. Since September 1976 bookings have been allocated to each Family of Schools in North York to facilitate busing arrangements.

Due to the frequent use of Forest Valley Outdoor Centre by elementary schools, it seems that the teachers, students and principals have found the resources and facilities of benefit to their regular programs. Principals of schools who have had teachers using the Centre for a number of years, should now be capable of assessing the long range benefits that are, or are not being derived by their staff and community.

One aspect of its operation which has been measured is The "Lasting Impact" of a One Week Outdoor Education Program at Forest Valley on grade 4 and 5 students (Taylor 1973) and grades 1,3 and 4 (Mawson 1973), Research Department, North York Board of Education. This study concluded that "students tend to remember best and appreciate those aspects of the trip which stress outdoor activity and de-emphasize the types of activity which they regularly experience in the classroom."

To date, little evaluation has been undertaken on the relation between one day visits to the Centre and:

1) the effect it has on changing the attitude of teachers and principals

2) the effect it has on initiating change in the regular elementary school and special education programs following visits to a centre

3) the long-lasting benefits elementary school principals perceive their staff and school programs have derived after several years of participating in the Forest Valley programs.

The study, therefore, focuses on gathering information concerning:

1) To what extent do principals and teachers perceive they have altered the classroom program?

2) To what extent do principals and teachers feel that the programs and resources at the Centre assist in developing a program which integrates outdoor activities with regular classroom activities?

3) To what extent do principals and teachers believe that the goals, programs and resources at the Centre are meeting the needs of North York students and teachers?

Sample

The sample was chosen from the bookings at Forest Valley. All teachers accompanying kindergarten, grades 3,5 and special education pupils to the Centre during the first half of October 1976, the last half of November 1976, and the first half of February 1977 and principals of the schools concerned, were included in the survey.

Method

A pilot was run in June 1976 by the Educational Research and Development Department to develop separate questionnaires for teachers and principals.

Prior to each sampling time, (October 1-15, 1976, November 15-30, 1976 and February 1-15, 1977) the names of teachers and schools were obtained from Forest Valley.

Approximately one week following the visit to the Centre, a questionnaire was sent to each teacher along with a letter asking for their co-operation and instructing them on what to do. If a teacher visited the Centre more than once during the sample periods, a questionnaire was sent out only after the first visit.

All principals of selected elementary schools were sent a questionnaire and covering letter in late February 1977.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Section I of the Forest Valley Evaluation contains a summary of the main response patterns of both the elementary teachers and principals. A more complete understanding of the response variation, including the responses of teachers at different grade levels is available in Evaluation of the Forest Valley Outdoor Education Centre Regarding Elementary Teacher Development and Attitude Change, Section II: Results of Teacher and Principal Surveys.

Sample

A total of 176 questionnaires were sent out to elementary teachers who had visited Forest Valley during the three sampling periods (54 kindergarten, 45 grade 3, 46 grade 5 and 33 special education). Fifty-nine percent of the questionnaires (103) were returned by 29 (54%) kindergarten, 30 (67%) grade 3, 22 (48%) grade 5 and 22 (67%) special education teachers. Forty (58%) of the sixty-nine teachers visiting Forest Valley in October responded along with 34 (50%) of the 68 teachers in November and 29 (75%) of the 39 in February.

Distribution of questionnaires to the elementary principals was based on the schools represented in the teacher sample. Of the 94 sent out in late February, a total of 74 (79%) principal questionnaires were returned.

Background of Respondents

1) Grade Taught

All teachers accompanying kindergarten, grades 3, 5 and special education classes were selected from the bookings at Forest Valley. As a result, a few teachers indicated they were teaching another grade or more than one grade level. The four sample groups therefore, were composed predominantly of teachers from the selected grades and a few teaching closely related grade levels.

2) Sex

Eighty-one percent of the teachers responding were female, 16% were male.

3) Class Size

Half of the teachers surveyed (49%) reported their class sizes ranged from 21 to 30 students. Thirty-four percent reported smaller classes, i.e., between 11 and 20 students, but a large number of this group (15 of the 35 teachers) were special education teachers.

4) Pupil/Teacher Population of Sample Schools

The majority of schools involved (61%) ranged in population from 200 to 500 pupils. A few principals responding indicated their school population was below 200 (15%) or over 800 (5%).

Half of the principals were working in schools with less than 15 teachers while another third were assigned to schools with 15 to 25 teachers. Forteen percent of the schools contained 26 to 36 teachers and four percent more than 36 teachers.

5) Years of Experience

Teachers

Over half of the teachers had taught in the North York system for at least 6 years. Very few (8%) indicated that it was their first year teaching in the Borough.

Principals

Eighty-seven percent have been an elementary principal in North York for more than 3 years. The majority have been a principal with this Board for more than seven years (62%).

Eighty percent of the elementary principals have been at their present school less than six years. Almost one quarter (23%) were in their first year as principal of their present school.

6) Teacher's Introduction to Outdoor Education

Two-thirds of the teachers first became involved in outdoor education through their work with or training in North York. The three most frequently mentioned methods were Forest Valley literature, workshops, visits, etc. (40%), suggestions from colleagues and consultants (27%) and courses in outdoor education offered by North York (13%). Twenty-five percent of the teachers became involved through personal interest or previous camping experiences (77%). Only seven percent said they became involved as a result of teacher training or work outside of North York.

Visits to Forest Valley

a) Frequency of Teacher Visits

Over the past two years twenty-six percent of the teachers have visited Forest Valley six or more times and another forty-nine percent between two and five times.

Over the past five years almost half of the teachers (45%) have visited Forest Valley eight or more times. Very few (9%) indicated three trips or fewer.

b) Proportion of School Staff

According to the principals, the following proportions of elementary teachers in the schools sampled have visited Forest Valley in the past two years.

Proportion of Teachers	Percentage of Schools
Less than 25%	12%
26% - 75%	66%
Over 75%	22%

Some principals experienced problems answering this question since almost one-quarter have been at their present school less than a year.

Approximately equal numbers of principals wish to maintain the present proportion (47%) as increase the proportion of staff (46%) using the Centre. Very few (7%) would like to decrease the amount of staff use.

Preferred Season and Length of Visit

There is a greater teacher preference for fall and spring (57%) than for winter visits to Forest Valley (44%). Kindergarten and grade 3 teachers expressed more desire for spring and fall than grade 5 and special education teachers. One-third of the teachers said they had "no preference" of season.

The only season in which a majority of teachers from all grade levels preferred half day visits was during the winter (36 of 45). As well, kindergarten teachers indicated a strong preference for half day visits in the fall and spring. More grade 5 and special education teachers indicated they preferred full days in the fall and spring than half days.

Time (Bookings)

Over half of the principals indicated their school receives sufficient bookings at Forest Valley to satisfy both pupils (53%) and teacher (58%) needs. Approximately one-third said "No" with respect to pupils (32%) and teachers (41%). A slightly higher percentage of primary pupils (41%) and teachers (39%) than junior division (36-32%) did not obtain sufficient bookings.

Objectives of Visit

Most teachers (89%) or their classes formulated objectives before their recent visit to Forest Valley. Sixty-one percent of the teachers accomplished all of their primary objectives and thirty-one percent some of their objectives. Only one teacher indicated "none" of the primary objectives were accomplished. Lack of time was the most frequent reason listed for not accomplishing the objectives.

Half of the teachers (51%) listed appreciation/awareness of nature as one of their primary objectives. Other objectives listed by at least a third of the teachers were:

- sensory awareness (43%)
- development of outdoor skills (38%)
- understanding environmental concerns (33%)
- play/exploration (33%)

Very few teachers mentioned the following as primary objectives:

- specific studies (8%)
- animal/plant observation (5%)
- language development (3%)
- social interaction/build relationships (3%)

Planning Activities

Four out of five teachers stated that specific activities had been planned prior to their most recent visit. Sixteen percent said neither they nor their class had planned specific activities.

The six types of activities planned by teachers and their classes were:

- specific projects (93%)
- observation of nature (86%)
- walks/hikes (57%)
- play (36%)
- collecting, e.g., leaves, seeds (18%)
- winter sports (17%)

More than ninety percent of all the planned activities were "successfully" or "very successfully" completed with the exception of winter sports (tobogganing and snow-shoeing).

A majority of the teachers indicated they would repeat their observation of nature (78%) and specific projects (57%) activities with the same grade level. Fewer stated they would repeat walks/hikes (37%), play (36%) and collecting (12%). When asked what new activities they would like to add to their program, teachers listed outdoor studies (79%), sports (21%) and camping (19%). Thirty-nine percent did not respond, indicating they either did not know what they would change or had not considered any activity changes.

Preparation Time

Before visiting the Centre, the majority of teachers spend up to an hour in preparation personally (56%) or with their students (54%). One-quarter of the teachers usually spend from one to three hours either organizing by themselves (29%) or with their students (25%). A few teachers (6%) spend more than three hours either personally or with their pupils (12%).

Evaluation Techniques

The techniques most frequently used by teachers to evaluate outdoor activities were observation of pupils' reactions (70%), discussion (57%) and charts, stories and pictures (57%). A few listed completion of projects (11%) and oral or written quizzes (6%) as a means of evaluating outdoor activities. Most teachers indicated they used more than one method of evaluation.

Problems Planning/Administering a Visit

Teachers

The most frequent problems teachers encountered while planning or visiting the Centre were lack of time and buses (31%) and assistance from the Forest Valley staff and parents (22%). A few teachers had difficulties with students who were not co-operative or properly dressed (13%) and the lack of facilities and programs for specific activities (12%). A third of the teachers did not answer this question indicating they did not have any major problems or difficulties.

More than half of the teachers (52%) alter their plans depending on the weather while one-quarter usually carry on with the planned activities and ignore the weather. Twice as many teachers (16%) cancel their visit rather than switch to a bad weather program (8%). Rain and low temperatures along with the lack of adequate clothing were the main reasons for cancelling.

Principals

Organizing time, e.g., timetabling, scheduling and allotting teachers (26%) and transportation (17%) were the main problems listed by principals. Eleven percent indicated the lack of information and assistance from Forest Valley created problems for them during planning. A few principals mentioned teacher preparation, providing adult supervision and weather conditions.

At least 47% of the principals do not have any problems when planning and more than 38% in administering visits to the Centre.

Outdoor Areas Visited at Forest Valley

Bases on their most recent visit to Forest Valley the four areas most frequently used by teachers and their students are the forest (78%), river area (78%), playground (64%) and meadow (54%). Between one-quarter and a third of the teachers used the swamp/pond (34%), toboggan hill(31%), commando course (27%) and the cookout area (25%). All kindergarten teachers (29) used the toboggan hill even in October.

Seventy percent of the teachers spent "the most time" at the forest. Other areas were the river (41%), playground (34%) and the meadow (31%). Fewer said the swamp/pond (18%) or cookout area (15%).

Almost all teachers (93%) indicated they would use the same areas of Forest Valley if they take the same grade level again. Four teachers who said "No", would select an alternate area to the river and two would change areas depending on the season.

Reasons for Selecting Forest Valley

More than half of the teachers selected Forest Valley for their recent visit because of its availability, closeness to buses (58%) and its facilities and space (52%). Other reasons for selecting the Centre were its stimulating experiences (16%), familiarity with the site (14%) and it was the day assigned (10%). Very few mentioned safety (4%), help offered by the Forest Valley staff (2%) or that it was recommended by other staff (2%).

Adequacy of Site

Almost all teachers (95%) found the Centre "adequate" to "more than adequate" for accomplishing their objectives.

Resource Materials

Prior to or during their most recent visit, twenty-five percent of the teachers made use of the equipment and supplies and twenty-one percent the Centre's preplanned activity guides. Only 13% of the teachers used the prepared units of study and 10% the professional library. The majority of teachers (54-78%) did not make use of the materials available. When asked why they did not use each of the materials listed, most teachers said either they did not need to use Forest Valley resources (50-88%) or they did not know the materials were available (9-29%).

When asked how frequently in the past they had made use of the materials, fifty-seven percent of the teachers indicated they had used the equipment and supplies at least "infrequently". Fewer teachers at least "infrequently" used the preplanned activities (49%), prepared units of study (36%) and the professional library (23%) at Forest Valley. Equipment and supplies was the only support material used "frequently" and "very frequently" by more than a quarter of the teachers (33%).

A majority of teachers have "never" used the professional library (60%) or the prepared units of study (51%). More than one-third have "never" used the preplanned activities (40%) or the equipment and supplies (35%).

Forest Valley Staff

Over the past two years half of the teachers have made use of the Forest Valley staff as on-site instructors for teachers (50%) and as assistants with their class (49%). Most teachers have not used the staff to assist them with their class at other sites and on overnight trips (75%) and have not had a resource person visit the school (56%). The main reasons given for not using the staff's services was they either did not need it (47-78%) or they did not know the services were available (22-50%).

More teachers said the Forest Valley staff was helpful during their recent visit (39%) than in planning (18%) or after their visit (10%). A majority of the teachers stated that the staff was not helpful during all three time periods (52-72%). The most frequent reason given by teachers who said they were not helpful, was they did not need help in planning (47%), during (72%) or after their recent visit (81%). Eleven percent said they requested help during their visit but it was not provided. Others did not know help was available for planning (7%), during (11%) or after their visit (18%).

Reference Following the Recent Visit

Sixty-one percent of the teachers indicated that their pupils referred to events only once or twice per day following their visit. One-quarter of the student groups did not make any reference to events at Forest Valley within two or three weeks of their trip.

The program areas teachers most frequently referred to following their visit were science/mathematics (37%), language (25%) and art, including music (12%). Only 54 (53%) of the teachers responded to this question due to problems interpreting it.

Pupil Likes/Dislikes of their Recent Visit.

Twenty-two of the twenty-nine kindergarten teachers together with a number of teachers from the other grades (44%) indicated that their pupils liked the playground most of all. A third of the teachers thought their pupils enjoyed the freedom to run and explore while others said students enjoyed the natural areas especially the forest (29%) and different skill activities including sports (21%) more than anything else.

Twenty-one percent of the teachers, half of whom were kindergarten teachers, said their students' greatest problem was the lack of facilities, e.g., washroom, drinks and things to play on. A few teachers believe their students liked the personal restrictions placed on them (9%) and shortness of time (9%) least of all. More than a third of the teachers (39%) did not list any student dislikes of Forest Valley.

Value of Recent Visit

Virtually all teachers believe that the trip was "worthwhile" for themselves and for their students. It is evident, however, that teachers think students benefit somewhat more. Almost half (48%) said that the trip was "most worthwhile" for the students while only a third (35%) indicated "most worthwhile" for themselves.

Value of Forest Valley Visits to Elementary Schools.

Ninety percent of the principals believe Forest Valley is "important" to "very important" in fulfilling their school's goals. The goal area most frequently mentioned as "best supported by Forest Valley" was student development including physical, social, attitudinal, skill and language development. Most principals (70%) also believe the Centre is very supportive of their environmental goals including appreciation of nature and man's impact on it.

In the area of program assistance, a number of principals (43%) stated Forest Valley offers support to integrate school programs, to provide a variety of learning experiences/"hands-on" and organized activities. Four percent mentioned the Centre's aid in staff development.

With regards to the activities offered, almost all principals said they were at least "worthwhile" for students (97%) and teachers (94%). Approximately one-third feel the Centre is "most worthwhile" for both.

Benefits from a Visit

Ninety-six percent of the principals believe that Forest Valley provides benefits to pupils beyond what can be obtained in the regular classroom program. More than half of the principals (52-54%) believe pupils in the primary division (grades 1-3) receive the greatest benefit. Fewer principals indicated the junior division or kindergarten (40%). Several principals listed special education programs, e.g., developmental (24%), perceptual (15%) and behavioural (17%) as also benefiting greatly.

The four benefits listed by the majority of principals as being important to all elementary grade levels including special education were:

- aid development of social skills
- provide variety of learning "hands-on" experience
- appreciate man's impact on the environment
- aid program integration

A fifth benefit (to develop awareness/appreciation of the natural environment) was also mentioned frequently except in relation to kindergarten.

Effect on School Program

Nearly half of the principals (46%) indicated they have noticed changes in their school program over the past five years. An equal number (47%) said there has not been any change resulting from visiting Forest Valley. In assessing the results of this question, it should be remembered that over half of the principals (54%) have been less than four years at their present school.

The most frequent change (68%) has been in the science/environmental studies programs, where there is more staff teaching science, using "in-depth" studies and better programs developed. A few principals have noticed an increase in outdoor education involvement (29%), use of the outdoors for skill development in other programs (15%) and a general increased awareness of the benefits derived from outdoor programs (9%).

Effect on Teaching Techniques

Teachers

Two-thirds of the teachers believe their visits to Forest Valley have not caused them to alter their classroom teaching methods. One-quarter said they had changed their methods of teaching.

Sixteen of the twenty-six teachers who said they had changed their classroom teaching methods have changed their science program to include more outdoor observing. In the other program areas, more outdoor activities and increased integration of programs were the two most frequently listed changes.

Principals

More than one-third (38%) of the elementary principals had noticed changes in teaching methods which are attributable to staff visiting Forest Valley. Half believe Forest Valley has not caused any change in the past five years.

Most principals who had observed change (89%) listed changes generally throughout their schools. The only program most of them had observed change in was science (68%). Other programs mentioned were physical education (18%), mathematics (18%), geography/social studies (14%), social development (14%) and language/art (11%).

A variety of changes were listed including more "hands-on" activities, more use of outdoors, more interest in specific topics, increased independence expected of students and teachers were more confident and better prepared.

Subject Relevance

Most teachers (83%) feel that they can make their classroom programs more relevant by visiting Forest Valley. Ten percent believe visits do not help build relevance in their classroom programs. Seventy-two of the eighty-five teachers who said it does help responded that visits to Forest Valley offered their students first hand experiences common to all students as well as acted as a unifying factor between programs.

Relation of Visit to Classroom Topics

Most teachers have either introduced new topics (81%) or expanded on topics previously introduced in the classroom (80%) during their visits to Forest Valley. A smaller majority indicated they had conducted programs not related to the classroom program (56%) or concluded topics developed in the classroom (55%).

Two-thirds of the teachers "most often" expand on topics introduced in the classroom while another twenty percent use theCentre mainly to introduce new topics. Very few teachers use their visits frequently to conclude topics (7%) or carry out programs not related to their classroom programs (5%).

Need for Structured Activities

Teachers

Approximately three-quarters of the teachers (72%) believe there is no need for a more structured activity at Forest Valley. Twenty-five percent think there should be more structuring. Seven of twenty-six teachers wishing more structuring listed the following programs: more introductory materials, physical activities and study programs for ecology, science and conservation. Other programs mentioned were specific programs for different levels and types of students and compass/orienteering games. Besides listing program, some teachers mentioned other types of structuring. Seven teachers requested that other teachers add more structuring to their programs and three teachers requested more assistance from the Forest Valley staff.

Principals

As well, a large majority of principals (78%) do not believe there is any need for more structured programs at Forest Valley. Among the requests for more structured programs were two for curriculum, two for sports activities and two to have classes visiting Forest Valley plan their objectives more carefully so as to not disrupt other groups.

Teacher Confidence

Two-thirds of the teachers feel more confident in their ability to teach outdoors since they began using Forest Valley. One-fifth said their confidence had not changed.

Principal's Attitude

Twenty-five principals (34%) said they had changed their attitude toward Forest Valley in the past five years. Ten who said they had changed along with fifteen principals who said they had not, indicated they were presently satisfied with the quality of service and facilities provided. The main reason for negative attitude change was principals thought the Centre was over used, boring or limiting (12).

Effect on Community Relations

Most principals indicated visits to Forest Valley have not contributed to any changes in the relationship of the school with the community (74%). A few principals (15%) said there have been some changes over the past five years which are related to using the Forest Valley facilities. The main change mentioned was parents have become more involved and are more appreciative of the school's program. It should be remembered that only 20% of the principals have been more than five years at their present school.

Professional Development

Teacher

Over one-half of the teachers indicated they have taken part in a Forest Valley day or evening workshop (52%) while approximately one-third have attended during a staff Professional Development Day (31%). More than three-quarters (77%) have never attended a weekend workshop at Forest Valley. Only a small percentage of the teachers (6-17%) indicated they have received encouragement to take further training in outdoor teaching methods.

Principals

In the past five years most principals (77%) have encouraged teachers to participate in Forest Valley workshops. Almost half (47%) of the elementary principals have encouraged teachers to visit Forest Valley during professional development days and twenty-three percent have also encouraged staff to participate in weekend workshops.

A relatively large number of principals indicated they have not encouraged any teachers to attend weekend workshops (49%) or use professional development days to visit Forest Valley (31%) in the past five years. Six principals listed specific activities related to outdoor education which they have promoted staff to participate in, e.g., photography, orientation meetings and cross-country skiing. Two principals added remarks that they are not encouraging staff due to other priorities and the fact staff involvement has always been high.

Encouragement of Outdoor Education

Teachers

More teachers have been encouraged to increase their use of outdoor facilities by their students (58%), school administration (44%) or other teachers (41%) than by the parents of their students (17%) or Assistant Superintendent of Schools (8%).

Principals

Most frequently, principals are being encouraged by teachers to increase the school's outdoor program at Forest Valley (34%) and other sites (47%). Approximately one-quarter of the principals have been encouraged by their pupils to visit the Centre (20%) or other sites (27%). Very few principals (5-9%) have been encouraged by either their Assistant Superintendent of Schools or the parents of their pupils. A few (7-14%) principals listed other encouraging staff, e.g., Outdoor Education Program Leader/ Co-ordinator or Forest Valley staff.

Two-thirds of the elementary principals said they encourage their teachers to increase their class involvement while thirty-one percent do not promote increased involvement in outdoor education. The main reason for encouraging teachers was to provide more variety of learning and "hands-on" experience (18). Other reasons included appreciation of man's impact (13), integrate classroom program (12) and aid social skill development (10).

Proportion of School Staff Visiting Other Sites

Sixty-two percent of the principals indicated that in the past two years less than half of their staff had taken their class to other natural sites. Only a small number (16%) indicate more than three-quarters of the staff had done so.

Principals desired either to maintain the present proportion (34%) or to increase the proporation of staff visiting other sites (66%). None of the principals indicated they wished to decrease the proportion of staff who take their classes to other natural sites.

Preference of Outdoor Sites and Frequency of Visit

Teacher

Forty-one percent of the teachers indicated their visits to Forest Valley had led them to use other outdoor sites. Approximately one-half (48%) believe their use of Forest Valley had not influenced them to visit other sites.

When asked to list their preference of natural sites (including Forest Valley) that they had visited in the past two years, a majority of teachers (58%) listed Forest Valley as their first choice. One-third preferred to visit local parks and ravines especially teachers of kindergarten and grade three. Of the remaining 28 sites the most frequently mentioned were Wilket Creek (14%) and High Park (12%). The greatest diversity of different sites (24) was listed by the special education teachers.

Over the past two years, teachers had averaged from 5 to 7 visits to the Centre and the same number to local parks and ravines.

Principals

When asked the same question concerning their school, the only site preferred by a majority of the elementary principals (78%) was Forest Valley. Based on where classes had visited in the past two years, a number of principals also preferred Cedar Glen (40%), Albion Hills Field Centre (35%), local ravines/valley (31%) and Boyd Field Centre (20%). Forty-one other sites were mentioned including several outside Metropolitan Toronto. Ten principals remarked that this question was not really an appropriate one since certain sites have advantages over others for achieving specific objectives.

The majority of principals (55-65%) believe their outdoor site preferences were the same as their teachers. More principals thought their preferences differed with primary teachers (18%) than with junior division teachers (8%). One-quarter did not know whether they differed with either group. Ten of the thirteen principals indicated they differed with the primary teachers (including kindergarten) over the selection of Forest Valley and six regarding Cedar Glen.

Future Site Selections

The one condition a majority of teachers (60%) are looking for when selecting an outdoor site is a variety of environmental features with more natural surroundings. Approximately one-quarter of the teachers (22%) are looking for sites which offer a greater variety of planned activities, program and facilities including equipment, shelters, lunch and washroom facilities. Fewer teachers are looking for safety during play (14%), a larger site with all the features of Forest Valley (13%), more time for planning and visiting (9%) and more staff aid (7%).

Problems Planning/Administering Visits to Other Sites

The five areas principals have the most difficulty with when planning and administering visits to sites other than Forest Valley are:

Transportation/distance	(35%)
Financing	(27%)
Staff timetabling	(16%)
Lack of help/knowledge from the site staff	(11%)
Availability/scheduling of an appropriate site	(10%)

More than a third and potentially as many as two-thirds of the principals(including those not answering) indicated they have no problems in planning. Between 23% and 51% (including the "no answer") had no difficulties administering visits to other sites.

Benefits of Other Sites

Almost all elementary principals (95%) believe that visits to natural sites provide benefits to students beyond what can be obtained in the regular classroom program. More principals (43-73%) indicated the junior division rather than the primary division including kindergarten (20-26%) gains the most from visits to natural sites. Few principals listed special education as benefitting greatly, e.g., developmental (19%), perceptual (13%) and behavioural (10%).

When asked to list the important benefits, principals more frequently mentioned junior division and special education than primary or kindergarten. The two benefits mentioned most frequently as being important for all elementary pupils were to aid development of social skills and develop an awareness/appreciation of the natural environment. Other benefits of importance mainly to the junior division and special education pupils were:

- further student development by residential overnight experiences.
- greater variety of outdoor activities
- provide a variety of learning/"hands-on" experiences.
- aid development of mental health/coping skills
- provide/promote outdoor skills

Value of Outdoor Education to Students

The majority of elementary teachers (60%) believe outdoor education's greatest value is to arouse interest or curiosity in nature. Other values listed by at least one-quarter of the teachers were to provide experiences related to learning in other programs (40%), contribute to social/moral development (33%) and to have fun and experience joy (25%).

Priority of Outdoor Education in Elementary Schools

Eighty-nine percent of the elementary principals give outdoor education an "above average" or "average" priority in their school program. A few rated it of "below average" priority (8%) compared to other school programs.

Proportion of Students Involved in Outdoor Education

Problems were experienced in responding to this question. The questionnaire was completed prior to the March holiday and some principals stated the present proportion while others responded based on the full school year (September 1976 - June 1977).

This year half of the elementary schools have involved between 10% and 50% of their pupils in Forest Valley activities. A quarter of the schools (27%) have involved between 50 - 70% and sixteen percent over 90% of their students at the Centre.

Similarly, three-quarters of the schools have involved between 10% and 70% of their pupils in visits to other sites. A few principals (12%) reported less than 10% of their pupils have visited a natural site other than Forest Valley this year. Only half the number of principals (8%) said more than 90% will visit other sites compared to Forest Valley.

Principals' Involvement in Outdoor Education

More than half of the principals (58%) have been actively involved in different aspects of their school's outdoor program. Approximately 4 out of 10 principals said they are not actively involved.

Although 38% said they were not involved, most listed similar activities to those who said "Yes". Nearly three-quarters of the principals (71%) help supervise students at the site. One-third assist in planning, financing and dealing with parents. Other involvements including encouraging or assisting in training staff and students for leadership in outdoor activities (14%) and assisting with the transportation of students and equipment (8%). The reason given by principals who were not involved was they are new at the school or had other commitments this year (4%).